

**Sarah Fox**

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**From:** Sarah Fox  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 8, 2019 10:19 AM  
**To:** <julie.roberts@noaa.gov>; <neil.jacobs@noaa.gov>  
**Cc:** <kseitter@ametsoc.org>; <president@nwseo.org>  
**Subject:** NOAA's Loss of Credibility

Mr. Jacobs and Ms. Roberts,

I am a homeowner on low-lying waterfront on the East Coast. I depend on accurate forecasting from NOAA to make decisions about property (e.g. evacuation of vehicles, clearing out of garages) and personal safety (e.g. whether to evacuate). I have always placed great faith in NOAA's forecasting. However, I am writing today about the recent decision by NOAA leadership to back the president's absurd warning that Alabama was in harm's way from Hurricane Dorian. This has me rattled.

Going forward, I will have less faith in NOAA's forecasts, because I won't know how they might have been tainted by politics. When NOAA releases a projection, I will have to research whether the president has made the same projection, and I will have to determine who made the projection first. Wherever there is agreement between NOAA and the president, I will have to question whether the president happens to be correct or whether NOAA is complicit in pushing a tainted narrative or covering up a gaffe. I will have to seek corroboration of NOAA's message from figures such as the presidents of labor unions, who might not even have access to the most complete data.

Mostly I will have to question whether there has been micromanagement of NOAA's forecasts by the president. We have seen his micromanagement elsewhere, for instance with "the wall." He wants the wall painted black. He wants points on the top and wants to do away with the "anti-climb" plates for aesthetic reasons. Will he have similar notions about what information NOAA should disseminate? Could certain forecasts have economic impacts he might want to avoid, because he owns coastal properties? Might he want to bend projected paths somewhat, or might he want to tweak the tidal surge forecasts? Might he want to disregard European model forecasts in favor of American model forecasts because he is angry with the Europeans? I honestly do not know what to expect, but I think any of this is possible.

Your decision to let the president dictate NOAA's message is extremely troubling. Coastal homeowners like myself will have to start second-guessing everything NOAA says by reverse filtering it through a political lens. Hurricanes are confusing enough already, and this will add significantly to the confusion. It will cost loss of property and probably even lives.

I urge NOAA to examine ways to isolate itself from the president's influence in ways that are visible and credible to coastal residents. Until you can do so, the East Coast will be a more dangerous place to live.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Fox, Ph.D.